

Skip to content
Pause background video
How television used to be made
ADAPT: Researching the history of television production technology

Home

Outside Broadcast
Technical Planning
Rigging
Sound
Colour Cameras
Camera Line-up
Recording
Captions
Crew Reflections
Crew Profiles

16mm
Introduction
Filming
Processing
Editing
Telecine
Crew Profiles

Post Production
Introduction
U-matic and Betacam
Linear Editing with Betacam
Avid Editing
Edit Teamwork
Tape Library
Discussion: video post production

Stories
Objects and Artefacts
Fixed Rig Television Production
Live as a television film editor
The evolution of television sound mixing
Outside Broadcast Reflections
Observational filming

Publications
Books and Articles
Social Media Report
Project Blog

About
How to Use Figshare
Project Team
Search for:
Search ...
Search

Scroll down to content

Television has only recently become an all-digital medium. Programmes used to be made using analogue video or celluloid film.

This is how 16mm film was shot:

Video Player

00:00

01:27

This is how analogue video worked:

Video Player

00:00

01:32

This website offers a hands on history of TV's physical media, used to create millions of hours of TV around the world. It offers:

Over 260 videos - most in short, medium and long length versions

More than 12 hours of footage

Interactive stories about television history

Profiles of television veterans

Our videos recreate how TV used to be made, using historic film and video technologies operated by the professionals who once used them every day.

All 260 videos can be downloaded and used under a Creative Commons licence from Europeana or the Figshare repository. Detailed descriptions of each video can be found by expanding the descriptions in the Europeana collection. There are three versions of each: bitesize, medium and full length.

Here's a lightening version of our recreation of 16mm filming, shot on four cameras:

Video Player

00:00

02:43

These videos were directed by Amanda Murphy as part of the ADAPT project, funded by the European Research Council, headed by Professor John Ellis. They provide unique information about how TV used to be made, and have been widely used, even by the BBC

<https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/research/bbc-tv-colour>

Scroll down to find out more about our reenactments

Our reenactments

Between 2013 and 2018, ADAPT carried out a series of ambitious and ground-breaking historical reenactment experiments.

We brought together retired television production staff and obsolete production equipment. Television film editors were reunited with flatbed editing tables. Camera operators once again operated long-disused electronic broadcast cameras.

Our modern digital cameras recorded participants as their memories flooded back. They worked together as teams, recreating their roles in the complex television production chain. This hands on history approach captures the subtle dynamics of television labour, which cannot easily be revealed in the traditional interview.

Our reenactments combined free-flowing television production activity and semi-structured interviews. The resulting video material sits somewhere between oral history and television documentary.

This use of hands on history is explored in our publications.

Hands on Media History (ed. by Nick Hall and John Ellis)

Scroll down to find out how to use this website

How to use this website

We filmed hundreds of hours of footage during our reenactment experiments. We edited these rushes into many series of videos which offer an insight into each stage of the historical television production process.

All of the project's videos are hosted on our Figshare repository, and many videos embedded in the pages of this website.

Videos of our 16mm television film reenactments, for example, follow the production process from shooting, through film processing, editing, and finally telecine. You can use the menus at the top of the page to explore various aspects of the television production process.

This site has just a few videos embedded in it. For our full collection of videos, please visit Europeana or the project's long-term data repository on the Figshare website. There you will find three versions of almost everything: short (i.e. bitesize); medium (i.e. highlights); long (i.e. real time).

A full catalogue of our video collections can be downloaded [here](#).

All videos are downloadable for you to use as you wish. Downloads can take time depending on network speeds.

You can also find similar videos in our curated collection of playlists on our YouTube channel.

Stories offer an in-depth, interactive way to explore the history of television production technology

This website also offers a Timeline which enables you to explore the chronological development of some of the key production technologies highlighted by this project.

Finally, we have produced a series of 'Stories' - in-depth, interactive accounts of television history and production culture.

ADAPT Videos Catalogue

[Click here](#) for a full list of our videos on Figshare and respective links.

You can also find similar videos on our YouTube channel.

Rights and Funding

Logo of the European Research Council and flag of the European Union. ADAPT was hosted by the Department of Media Arts at Royal Holloway, University of London. The project received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 323626).

Except where otherwise stated, all content on this website - including embedded videos - is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

NotificationsVideo is playing.